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Against Land lords setting of Houses to Un-free Persons; And also, an Act for purging the City of Vagabonds and Beggers

EDINBURGH, the Twenty Eighth Day of October, One Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Five Years.



HE which day, the Lord Provost, Bailies, Council, and Deacons of Crafts, being convened in Council, taking to their Consideration, that notwithstanding of diverse Acts of Council made for purging the City of Vagabonds, Beggers, and other idle Persons, who daily trouble the Inhabitants, and others His Majesties Leidges resorting thereto; Yet they are so numerous, that the Citizens and other His Majesties Leidges, cannot without great trouble walk upon the Streets, which is very burdensome to the City, and disgraceful to the place: Considering that by the 15 Act of the third Session of our late Sovereign Lords first Parliament, it is Declared that it shall be leifome to all Persons or Societies, who have, or shall set up any Manufactories within this Kingdom, to seize upon, and apprehend any Vagabonds, who shall be found Begging, or who being Masterless, and out of Service, and have not wherewith to maintain themselves by their own means and work: And empowering them to employ the saids Vagabond persons and their Bairns, in their common work, and declaring they shall continue therein during their life time, and shall be subject to their Masters correction and chastisement, in all manner of correction, (life and torture excepted) The saids persons being always employed by the saids Manufactories with advice of the Magistrates of the place where they shall be seized upon. And the Council being now resolved that all the Vagabonds, Beggers, and other idle persons, and their Children that are above the age of 5 years, that can be found upon the Streets of the City, or in any part of the same, or Suburbs thereof, shall be apprehended and put into the Correction-house, and set at work to Spin and Card, and working such Manufactory work as they shall be employed to do by the Keeper of the Correction-house and his servants, which they judge to be the best expedient for purging the City and Suburbs of the saids idle Persons and Vagabonds, and preventing the increase of them in time coming. Therefore, they hereby Command and Charge these persons who shall receive the Magistrates Commission, to take and apprehend all such Vagabonds, idle Beggers, whores, Thieves, and Masterless persons, and their Children above the age of 5 years, who shall be found within the City, or any part thereof, or Suburbs of the same, and present them to the Magistrates, that thereafter they may be Imprisoned within the said House of Correction, to be set at work by the said Master of the Correction-house and his Servants, in manner foresaid; who are to remain therein during all the days of their life-time, conform to the tenor of the said Act of Parliament, during the which space they are to receive all manner of punishment and correction, (life and torture excepted:) And in like manner, the Council taking into consideration, that the City hath been, and is greatly abused, by suffering Strangers, Vagabonds, un-free Persons, poor and indigent Bodies, to plant and have their Habitations within this City; and that by harbouring of the saids persons (and such as they resort) the Town is defiled with all kind of Vice, the liberty of Free-men usurped, the City over-burdened with sustaining of that kind of people, their Wives, Children, and such as they resort, particularly in the time of Death, and the Monthly contribution appointed for their own poor, employed and consumed upon them: and that for remedee thereof, the Magistrates and Council by their Act of the Date the 22th. day of December, 1676. years, did Statute and Ordain, that no persons set their Houses or Lands within the City, or Suburbs thereof, in any time hereafter, to any un-free persons, that are not Landed Gentlemen, or Members of the Colledge of Justice, without a special Ticket from the Bailie of the Quarter in Writt, within whose Bounds the saids Lands lyes, under the pain of an Un-law of Twenty Pounds, to be taken off the Setters or Owners of the saids Lands, or Houses, ilk person to whom their Land or Houses was to be set, with the Escheat of an Years Mail to the Towns use: And where any Lands or Houses are set to such persons, that the Owners, or Setters, remove the saids persons instantly; and that the Bailies shall give no Ticket to the saids unfree persons, but upon Caution to be found Acted in the Town Books, that they shall keep and fulfill the Articles following; to wit, That they shall receive no Vagabonds, Naughty or Vicious Persons, nor any who are suspect of Theft, or Relet of Theft, or of keeping of Brothel-houses, nor Masterless persons within their Houses, under the pain of Twenty Pounds, so oft as they failzie Item, They shall use no unlawful Vocation, or usurp the Liberty of a Free-man, under the said pain. Item, That neither they, their Servants, Wives, nor Children, shall be burdenable to the good Town, under the pain of an Un-law of an hundred Merks. Item, That they shall be no ways disobedient to the Church, or Magistrates, or Officers of the said Burgh, under the said pain, and their Penalties to be paid by the saids Cautioners. The Council do revive the foresaid Act, in the whole Heads, Articles and Clauses thereof; and Ordains the same to take effect, and to be put to due Execution in all time coming. And further, it is Statute and Ordained, that Out-land poor Beggers, and other poor, that hath been Burges Bairns in this Burgh, remove and dispatch themselves forth of this Burgh, Bounds and Liberties thereof, and to retire to the place, or Paroch where they were born, or formerly recided, so that they be not found nor seen within the same, at any time hereafter, under the pain of putting them in the Thieves-hole, 48 hours for the first fault, and Scourging of them thereafter; as they shall be found within the Bound foresaid. And Ordains this presents to be Printed, and Published through the City and Suburbs, by Tuck of Drum, and affixed upon the most conspicuous places of this City, that none pretend ignorance. Extracted by me,

JO. RICHARDSONE.